

Abstract

RESEARCH PAPER: The relationship between stress and emotional eating and the intake of foods high in fat and sugar among undergraduate college aged female students.

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between stress and emotional eating and the intake of foods high in fat and sugar. The study used a convenience sample of female college students aged 18-24 years. Subjects were recruited from classes in Family and Consumer Sciences. Subjects were asked to complete two questionnaires, The Eating and Appraisal Due to Emotions and Stress questionnaire and a food frequency questionnaire. Results showed that there were no relationships between weight status and stress-related eating ($\chi^2=.35$, $df=3$, $p=.95$) and the ability to cope and weight status ($\chi^2=3.27$, $df=3$, $p=.35$). However, there were significant inverse correlations between ability to cope and combined intake of sweet and salty energy dense foods score ($r = -.28$, $df=92$, $p=0.01$) and between ability to cope and intake of fast food ($r = -.21$, $df=93$, $p=.04$). There was a highly significant positive correlation between intakes of sweet energy-dense foods and salty energy-dense foods ($r = .40$, $df=91$, $p=.00$). The results of this study provided support for the relationship between stress and eating foods high in sugar and fat.